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Hegesistratus of Sigeum

Alain Duplouy

► **To cite this version:**

Alain Duplouy. Hegesistratus of Sigeum. Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor, 2002.
hal-04181209

HAL Id: hal-04181209

<https://hal.science/hal-04181209>

Submitted on 16 Aug 2023

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Hegesistratus of Sigeum

Summary :

Hegesistratus was the son of Peisistratus and an Argive woman. His father appointed him tyrant of Sigeum. He had to fight to maintain his domain.

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH

Argos

MAIN ROLE

Tyrant

1. Birth - Family - Descent

[Herodotus](#) relates that Hegesistratus was the illegitimate son of Peisistratus by the Argive Timonassa, daughter of Gorgilus of Argos, and former spouse of Archinus of Ambracia.¹ The word 'illegitimate' does not mean that Peisistratus had not married Timonassa, only that their marriage was accomplished according to the laws of the Argives. As L. Gernet has convincingly argued, the family was matrilineal and the children born in this marriage were not recognized as Athenians by Peisistratus' fellow citizens;² they were Argives.

2. Activity

This marriage secured for Peisistratus the military support of Argos, which was to prove important in the Battle of Pallene (546 BC). It is mentioned that Hegesistratus brought with him one thousand Argives to fight for Peisistratus' final return to Athens.³ This date is perhaps inaccurate, for Hegesistratus was underage in 546 BC.

Some years later, Peisistratus fought against the [Mytilenians](#) in order to recapture Sigeum, which had come under their control. As a reward for the military assistance he had once received from Gorgilus of Argos, Peisistratus offered his Argive son, grandson of Gorgilus, the recently vanquished city. Hegesistratus was forced to fight to maintain this city under his control.⁴ When Hippias, the legitimate Athenian son of Peisistratus and heir to the [tyranny](#) of Athens fled the city in 510 BC, he first sought refuge in Sigeum, before being reunited again with his daughter, Archedike, at [Lampsacus](#).⁵

1. Hdt. 5.94.

2. Gernet, L., "Mariages de tyrans", *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (Paris 1968), p. 347.

3. Arist., *Ath.* 17.4.

4. Hdt. 5.94

5. Hdt. 5.65; Th. 6.59.4.

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	Viviers D. , "La conquête de Sigée par Pisistrate", <i>AC</i> , 56, 1987, 5-25
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Glossary :

	tyrant, the
The initial meaning of the term was the leading archon of a noble origin. Later on he was the usurper of rightful power and the one who was ruling in an absolute way, aiming ostensibly to the welfare of his people.	

SOURCES

Herodotus, *Histories*, Book V.